

being Filipino America. All of us must work to stop this hatred.

And yet, as always, we have seen a resilient community persevere through all. In my own district, I have joined my friends for community clean up days at the Filipino Community Center to help protect and promote their heritage. With my colleagues in the House, I have reintroduced our Filipino Veterans Family Reunification Act, which seeks to reunite Filipino soldiers with their children.

All of this is why I recently joined my friend and colleague Congresswoman YOUNG KIM in introducing H. Res. 724, a bipartisan resolution to express support for the designation of October as Filipino American History Month. We urge our colleagues' support to promote an ongoing appreciation of the contributions of Filipino Americans to our country and the rich diversity of our Nation.

To Fil-Ams everywhere, Maraming Salamat Po and Dios Ti Agngina, congratulations. I truly look forward to partnering with them on their next proud chapters.

TRIBUTE TO MRS. AGATHA  
SHORTER-LEWIS

HON. SALUD O. CARBAJAL

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 28, 2021

Mr. CARBAJAL. Madam Speaker, today I rise to celebrate the life of Mrs. Agatha Shorter-Lewis, a member of CA-24's NAACP Branch. Mrs. Shorter-Lewis has been described as "a social justice, human and civil rights champion," because of her hard work fighting for equal rights throughout the Central Coast. Agatha Noel Shorter-Lewis was born in Los Angeles, California on September 7, 1950, to Leon and Martha Shorter. As a young woman, she studied at a community college in the Los Angeles area, transferred to the University of California, Santa Barbara and earned a bachelor's degree in sociology in 1975.

In 1973, Mrs. Shorter-Lewis began volunteering with Santa Barbara County Probation Department, interned with them in 1974 and in 1975 at the age of 24, she took the test for Deputy Probation Officer II and scored 1#. On January 20, 1976, Mrs. Shorter-Lewis was sworn in as the first Black female Deputy Probation Officer hired by Santa Barbara County. Her first assignment was working with Juveniles.

In an April 2001, Santa Maria Times newspaper article, Mrs. Shorter-Lewis recounted her time at the Probation Department noting one case stands out: "A boy, who just wouldn't go to school and was giving his parents, school administrators and teachers chaos. She told him, 'Listen, if you don't get up and go to school on time, I'm going to have to get there to your house and when you turn over, I'm going to be in bed with you, because I told you to get up and go to school.'" The young man thought she was playing with him and wasn't going to do it. Early one morning his mom called saying he wouldn't get out of bed. She told his mom "I'm on my way" and when she arrived at the house, she told the mom "don't wake him up anymore, begging him to go to school" and eased up in bed with him. When he turned over, he said "Oh, Oh,

Miss Shorter, Miss Shorter, I'm going to school, I'm going to school." She said, "sure you are going to school because I'm going to wait right here until you get up." She drove the boy to school that day and his mother never had problems with him again.

While at Probation, Mrs. Shorter-Lewis helped countless youth and their families changing their lives through dedication and caring while providing structure to help them reach their full potential. Mrs. Shorter-Lewis served the last 8 years with the department in the Adult Investigation Unit, investigating felony offenses, and determining whether or not to grant probation. She represented Probation in Court once a week as a Hearing Officer in Judge Rogelio Flores courtroom.

Mrs. Shorter-Lewis served 27 years as Deputy Probation Officer, retiring on April 27, 2001, due to health issues.

Mrs. Shorter-Lewis married Rev. Henry Littleton Lewis, Jr. on January 16, 1993. Their wedding was the biggest wedding event in Santa Maria, with 25 bridesmaids many of whom were Judges, attorneys, and Probation Officers and more than 1,000 guests in attendance. One of her biggest joys was on September 12, 2013, when Rev. Lewis became Pastor of New Hope Missionary Baptist Church and she became First Lady of the church, a position she absolutely treasured. She was an active church member, and in her own words she served in every office of the church but "Pastor!" In addition to First Lady, at New Hope Missionary Baptist Church, she served in the capacity of Church Clerk, Sunday School Teacher, Women's Ministry President, Program Committee Chair, and Women's Choir. She was also active with Coast Counties District Association serving as local president, District President, Minister's Wives Chairperson, and on various activity planning committees. At the State Baptist level, she was Vice-President of the Women's Department, Chair of Advisory Council of past Presidents, Serendipity Speaker and Teacher. At the National Baptist level, she was a delegate representing California State Baptist many times, Queen candidate for the Women's Department under Women's President Sister Alma Tate. With Rev. Lewis untimely death on September 13, 2013, Mrs. Shorter-Lewis First Lady position ended; however, she remained an active leader and member of the church.

In addition to church, Mrs. Lewis was very active in the community. After being sworn in as a Deputy Probation Officer, Mrs. Shorter-Lewis moved to Santa Maria. Once in Santa Maria, she tried renting a home, but each time would be denied when she showed up and the owner saw she was African American. She did not let blatant racism deter her instead renting an apartment for two years and then becoming a homeowner before age 30. She was a lifetime/lifelong member of the National Association For the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and made history again as the Santa Maria-Lompoc Branch second President in 1981 at the age of 31. Under her presidency the Branch's annual professional fashion show was born, an event that allowed the community to come out, get dressed up, enjoy dinner and the latest fashions from all over the world while supporting the Branch and the Branch's Scholarship recipients. Since its inception, the annual Fashion Show has awarded hundreds of scholarships to underserved youth to attend college and it continues 37

years later. When Mrs. Shorter-Lewis's presidency ended in 1984, she continued her advocacy serving as first vice-president from 1985 to 1988, second vice president from 1989 to 1990, on the Executive Committee from 1991 to 2018, and as Executive Committee Emeritus from 2019 to her untimely death on October 5, 2021. In each role, she was always a Drum Major for Justice answering every call she was asked to do.

Continuing as a trailblazer, Mrs. Shorter-Lewis was a business owner of Almagathai Ladies' Hats & Suits, Men's Ties and Jewelry along with her best friend, Mrs. Alma Tate. Mrs. Shorter-Lewis loved cruises and vacations and celebrated many birthdays on cruise ships including her 30th, 50th and 60th. On one of those cruises, she was crowned the ship's queen. She and Rev. Lewis spent their 20th wedding anniversary in Hawaii.

Mrs. Shorter-Lewis was known by most people, well respected in the community, larger than life, outgoing, family and people oriented, with a bubbly personality, a disarming smile, was a dynamic public speaker, very assertive, compassionate, a good listener able to discern truth. She celebrated many family vacations and reunions, chaired extra-large celebrations for her family and friends including her sister Carolyn's 65th birthday, numerous retirement celebrations for her friends, 75/76th birthday celebration for her friend and arranged for the community to attend the play "The Color Purple" in Los Angeles on a chartered bus.

Over her lifetime, Mrs. Shorter-Lewis, received numerous community awards and recognitions including awards from the Santa Maria-Lompoc Branch, City of Santa Maria, and Vision of Hope, among others.

RECOGNIZING CAPTAIN JERAN  
AKERS, RECIPIENT OF TEXAS'  
THIRD CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  
2021 CONGRESSIONAL VET-  
ERAN COMMENDATION

HON. VAN TAYLOR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 28, 2021

Mr. TAYLOR. Madam Speaker, today, it is my privilege to honor fifteen distinguished military veterans from Texas' Third Congressional District who answered the call to serve their Nation honorably, both in uniform and following their return to civilian life. The recipients of the 2021 Congressional Veteran Commendation exemplify the time-honored qualities of patriotism, service before self, and bold leadership. Following their time in service, their efforts in our community have earned these fine individuals recognition as the recipients of this prestigious commendation. Their stories of sacrifice will encourage future generations to pursue a life dedicated to the very values we cherish as Americans: faith, freedom, and democracy. One such hero is Captain Jeran Akers of Plano, Texas.

During his time as a student at the University of Alabama, Jeran Akers, would begin his path to defending our nation by serving as a member of the Air Force ROTC and the Arnold Air Society. Later, while on active duty from 1969 to 1973, Captain Akers, would earn a Master of Arts in Public Administration. One of his most notable posts was overseeing one